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**BACK AT HIS OLD TRICKS.**

... and J. A. Bigham was named as owing \$7,189.41. \* \* \* At the request of Mr. Bigham, a SECOND auditing was had of his books and he was given credit for \$6,916.25 for cash payment and cancelled warrants, putting him PRACTICALLY IN BALANCE.—Caruthersville Argus.

Anything wrong about the above? Is there the least cause for criticism of Mr. Bigham? Certainly not. When the auditors checked his books he was treasurer of Pemiscot county. At the time the auditors made their report Mr. Bigham had not taken credit for certain warrants he had paid. When he was given credit for these his books balanced. That was all there was to it. The same condition would be found with every treasurer the county ever had or ever will have. There has been no other system devised for transacting the business of this or any other county. It did not require auditing to discover this, nor is a cent Mr. Bigham paid in making final settlement due to the auditing. All would have been adjusted, as it was, in due course of regular settlement with the county as required by law. No one knows this better than the editor of the Argus, yet he, on previous occasions, and again at this late day, tries to make it appear that Mr. Bigham had stolen \$6,916.25 from the county, and that due to the auditing the same was restored.

After making the statement quoted above, practically true, and which casts no reflections upon Mr. Bigham, the editor of the Argus, in the same article, like the sly fox trying to deceive, doubles back on his trail and hands the public this:

The total payments to the persons doing the auditing were \$4,530.98, while the amount of cash and warrants turned over by Mr. Bigham in making his final settlement, according to the report of the auditors, was \$6,916.25.

Here are two statements from the editor of the Argus. In one breath he gives Mr. Bigham justice, barely so, niggardly so; in the next he exerts his proficiency in innuendo to make it appear that Mr. Bigham stole \$6,916.25 from the county, which he refunded, and which more than paid the expense of the auditing. "The auditing cost \$4,530.98, but the county was gainer because Mr. Bigham paid in \$6,916.25." That, though false as sin, is what he wants the public to believe. He does not want the taxpayers to know that he, the daddy, mammy and wet nurse of the auditing, caused the expenditure of \$5,000 of their money for something worse than nothing. So desperate is he that he would prefer to blacken some man's good name rather than have the people know the truth about the useless waste his fanaticism has cost them. Hard up, indeed, is the man who will resort to such nefarious methods in order to deceive the public.

All this, however, is nothing new. It is only thrashing over old straw. Most people will remember how fully this matter was gone into by the newspapers at the time. It will also be remembered that Mr. Bigham personally called the editor to account and that a half-hearted retraction was made, as the files of his paper will show. It is the same falsehood that caused Carl Bigham to slap the editor's face, after which he remained quiet until now. That his falsehood then was malicious is proven by its repetition. But it is nothing new—not at all. Same old howl, same old falsehood—all there is or ever was to the auditing is falsehood and what it cost the taxpayers—\$5,000.

**"REGRETTABLE."**

It is regrettable that the taxpayers should be forced to lose the sum of more than \$37,000 justly due them.—Caruthersville Argus.

If that was all, it would not be so bad. It is equally or more regrettable that the taxpayers should be forced to lose the balance of that \$42,000 which the Argus advocated a compromise for on a basis of \$25,000. It is also regrettable, it not a crime, that the county did not discover, at the time John McFarland went out of office, turning over to the county through Lee Road, cashier of the Peoples Bank and chief backer of the Argus, the sum

of \$45,000, that the Pemiscot County Bank was insolvent and in a failing condition. The backer of the Argus knew this, because he presented the check to the Pemiscot County Bank and could not get the money on it. Instead, as developments disclose, the backer of the Argus joined with the Pemiscot County Bank and assisted that institution in making a bond—such a bond as it turned out to be—to secure the county's \$42,000. The loss of this tremendous sum is what is hurting the taxpayers and not the alleged shortage of \$37,000 reported by the auditors, and which there is nothing to back up but missing and worm eaten records. During the administrations of Tom Patterson and John McFarland the county funds were never short—there was always cash to pay warrants, which shows, as nothing else can, that the county's finance was satisfactorily handled. This is something the people have not forgotten, and the cash talks louder than auditors' figures compiled from incomplete records, as valueless as a retired oyster can glistening in the moonlight.

**THE ARGUS' POSSUM.**

Regardless of the financial feature of the matter, the county has been a great gainer following the auditing.—Caruthersville Argus.

One frosty night, when per-simmons and taters and 'possums were ripe, two negroes went hunting—not together, but in the same settlement. One was named Rufus-Rastus Johnson Brown, the other, Si, just Si. Brown caught a 'possum and after midnight, hungry, tired and sleepy, rounded in at his cabin and built a fire. He dressed the 'possum, put it in an oven on the hearth and laid down and went to sleep. Si met with failure. Returning to his home and passing the cabin where Brown's 'possum was roasting in the oven, he sniffed the appetizing odor and went in. Being hungry and finding the 'possum ready to serve, he withdrew it from the coals and ate it. Having finished, he laid the bones beside the sleeping negro, greased his lips and departed. As the chickens were crowing for day Brown awoke, stretched himself and reached for the 'possum. The oven was empty. Beside his pallet on the floor were the bones, picked clean. Brown licked his lips and they were greasy. "Sholy I did eat dat 'possum," said Brown, "but ef I did eat him, he dun me de leas' good o' any possum what I ever did eat."

So with auditing the books. It did us the least good of anything we ever spent \$5,000 for. We may have got a few bones, but we didn't get enough fat to grease our lips; and the stink floating around from the corpse that was left is enough to run a buzzard off a chattering wagon.

The Argus says the auditing suits were dismissed because "various records and papers essential in preparation of the case had disappeared." The "essential records and papers missing" are the ones never found by the auditors. That is why the report was not worth the paper it was written on and why the cases should never have been placed on the docket. Everybody knows that after the courthouse was moved from Gayoso to Caruthersville and before the vaults were built, many years elapsed when the records were unsafe, and many were discovered missing and worm eaten. Also, the worms, once in the papers, continued to destroy them, probably more or less until the present time. It required no imported auditors to discover this, which was about all that was discovered. Any ten-year-old boy could have performed the service at a cost of fifty cents or less, whereas it cost \$5,000 or more. If we cannot count our own money, and if there are not enough competent people in Pemiscot county to do our auditing, we had as well destroy our books and go out of business.

Now and then we find a person who seems to think that their subscription is not due until the end of the year. No greater mistake could be made. All subscriptions are due and payable in advance. We have had so much trouble with credit subscriptions

and our losses have been so heavy that we are fast eliminating them and coming to a strictly cash basis, because we find it better and more satisfactory to all concerned and it makes better and more lasting friends.

**Deadheading Newspapers.**

It would be hard for the public to believe or realize the amount of free work the newspapers are asked to do, which, simmered down, is a graft pure and simple. It comes in the way of requests to publish prepared articles, all the way from pulls and boosts for political candidates down to free advertising, which is intended to be deadheaded upon the unsuspecting publishers by the sleek and high-salaried "press agents" and "press bureaus" and "publicity departments," which is sent out "free," to "help the editor," and oftentimes the real purpose and intent of the stuff is so well disguised and concealed that the busy editor does not detect it and gives space to matter that should be paid for at the regular advertising rates.

The Herald receives enough of such stuff each week to fill its entire space, and we presume most newspapers have the same experience, and their waste baskets are over-taxed.

The country is full of "press bureaus," "bureaus of information," "publicity departments" and "press agents," who draw big salaries and wax fat at the expense of those who think the average editor is so dense that he can be deadheaded out of his space, when the fact is, not one paper in a thousand even gives it a serious thought.

The same amount of money dumped into the coffers of the "press agents," etc., for the purpose of deadheading the newspapers, if spent in a legitimate way for advertising, would bring some results, but as it is, it is worse than thrown away, because the ill will

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of the newspapers is incurred. It is difficult to estimate to what extent this graft goes by the "press bureaus." Of course those seeking their services are duped and swindled, because they cannot deliver the goods. The practice has become so general however that many concerns and organizations have "publicity departments" of their own, which is a useless expense, because the newspapers of the country have become wise to such matters, and every batch of stuff sent out for FREE publication is an open affront to the newspapers receiving it.

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